

Rep. Doris Matsui Speaks on House Floor Advocating For Water Recycling Programs

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congresswoman Doris O. Matsui (CA-05) spoke on the House floor on behalf of the House Committee on Rules to advocate for passage of Bay Area Regional Water Recycling Program Extension Act introduced by Chairman George Miller. Congresswoman Matsui's opening statement, as prepared for delivery, is below:

"I first want to thank Chairman Miller and Chairman Stark as well as Representatives Eshoo, Honda, Woolsey, McNerney, Lofgren, Napolitano, and Speier for their work on this bill, and efforts to address the Bay Area's water needs. I also commend Senators Feinstein and Boxer for introducing identical legislation in the Senate, and their leadership on this issue.

"As the elected Representative from Sacramento and as a farmer's daughter from the Central Valley, I understand that water is critical to our state's economy, and our way of life. After three years of drought, pumping restrictions, and lost jobs from the Valley to the Coast, there is no doubt that improving the capability of water recycling will help address these problems and lessen the burden on the Bay-Delta ecosystem. While recycling is not the only way to meet the Bay Area and California's water requirements, it must be part of our comprehensive solution.

“Effective water use will help keep California’s agricultural economy strong and the Delta healthy, and ensure that the needs of Northern California businesses, farmers and residents are not ignored. Under the Title XVI water recycling program, H.R. 2442 would authorize six additional water recycling projects for the Bay Area that would provide 7.2 million gallons of water daily and serve more than 24,000 households.

“Collectively, these projects will save 2.6 billion gallons of water per year in the region, offering a new water supply of treated wastewater for industrial and irrigation use. Specifically, the Bay Area Regional Water Recycling Program Expansion Act would authorize \$38 million in federal assistance under the Interior Department’s Bureau of Reclamation for the design, planning, and construction of these new water projects. It would also expand the authorizations for two existing projects. H.R. 2442 would stipulate that the federal share of the cost of the projects not exceed 25% of the total cost, and bars the Department from funding operation or maintenance of the projects.

“It is important to note that this legislation has been endorsed by the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA), which includes every major agricultural and urban water agency in the state, and represents the largest coalition of public water agencies nationwide. Additionally, the WaterReuse Foundation, which serves more than 180 public water agencies, cities, and major engineering and technology firms has urged that we “move expeditiously” on the bill.

“These groups understand that no one wins when these kinds of local projects are held hostage because of disputes over the operation of federal water projects. We all know that there are some serious concerns about the water crisis in California.

“I was back in my district over the weekend, M. Speaker, and everyone at home was talking about a water deal being negotiated by the legislature and the Governor. From the local and state levels all the way here to Washington, there are a number of different ideas about how to address our water issues in California. Some of them I prefer more than others and some of them are preferred more than others by my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. But one thing is for sure: limiting our state’s water supply by holding up recycling projects like those in this bill will not solve anything.

“In fact, it will only prolong our collective efforts to seek solutions to California’s water problems. For these reasons, I strongly support the rule and the underlying legislation, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.”

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